

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 119916

NODIS
CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:MNUC, PARM, SF

SUBJECT:SOUTH AFRICA NUCLEAR PROBLEM

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1. YOU SHOULD TAKE EARLY OPPORTUNITY WITH APPROPRIATE HOST
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO REVIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON
SOUTH AFRICA NUCLEAR PROBLEM ALONG LINES OF PARA 2 BELOW.
YOU SHOULD STRESS SENSITIVITY OF INFORMATION REGARDING THIS
ONGOING DIPLOMATIC PROCESS, AND ASK THAT IT BE PROTECTED

ACCORDINGLY. PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF PROSPECTIVE SMITH VISIT, IN PARTICULAR, COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO PROSPECTS FOR ITS SUCCESS.

2. ON APRIL 7, THE SAG RESPONDED TO FEBRUARY US-SAG TECHNICAL NUCLEAR TALKS AS FOLLOWS: " THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FOUND THESE TALKS INTERESTING AND USEFUL, AND AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED IT IS READY FOR, AND IN FACT IS LOOKING FORWARD TO, DISCUSSIONS OF BROADER ISSUES ON THE BASIS OF PM VORSTER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER." WE REGARDED THIS RESPONSE AS UNSATISFACTORY, IN THAT IT FAILED TO INDICATE WHETHER SOUTH AFRICA WAS PREPARED TO MOVE TOWARD NPT ACCESSION AND SAFEGUARD AT THE VALINDABA ENRICHMENT PLANT. ACCORDINGLY, SECRETARY VANCE RAISED THE NUCLEAR ISSUE WITH

SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS DURING HIS BRIEF STOP IN PRETORIA ON APRIL 16. ON THAT OCCASION, FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA STATED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S ADHERENCE TO THE NPT AND ACCEPTANCE OF SAFEGUARDS AT THE VALINDABA ENRICHMENT PLANT WERE BOTH "POSSIBLE". ON THAT BASIS, THE SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD HAVE AMBASSADOR SMITH VISIT SOUTH AFRICA FOR TALKS ON THESE KEY ISSUES AS WELL AS THE RANGE OF NUCLEAR QUESTIONS RAISED BY PRIME MINISTER VORSTER LAST OCTOBER. WE ARE NOW DISCUSSING WITH THE SAG THE POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING TALKS INVOLVING SMITH, PERHAPS IN THE LATTER PART OF JUNE. OUR POSITION GOING INTO THESE
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TALKS REMAINS THAT, UNLESS SOUTH AFRICA COMMITS ITSELF TO NPT ADHERENCE AND INTERIM SAFEGUARDS AT VALINDABA, WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY TO SOUTH AFRICA. WE WILL WANT TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS AS WE DEVELOP OUR PLANS.

3. FYI. GIVEN THE PROSPECT OF A SMITH VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA, WE CONTINUE TO PLACE HIGH VALUE ON DEFERRING UN SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM. A NON-PROLIFERATION EXPERT FROM THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE DISCUSSING TACTICS ON DEFERRAL WITH THE WESTERN GROUP IN NEW YORK MAY 11, AND WILL REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS AS OUTLINED IN PARA 2. WE BELIEVE MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNEL FOR CONSULTATIONS ON THIS ISSUE CONTINUES TO BE IN CAPITALS, IN WHICH APPROPRIATE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE RESIDES. MAY 11 MEETING WITH PERMREPS IN NEW YORK IS INTENDED PRIMARILY TO REVIEW STRATEGY FOR HANDLING THE UN ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM, SUBSTANCE OF WESTERN APPROACHES TO AFRICANS, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF EFFORTS TO KEEP SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM OUT OF SECURITY COUNCIL AT THIS TIME. WE MAY WISH TO ARRANGE FURTHER MEETINGS IN CAPITALS ON DETAILS OF UPCOMING

US-SAG TALKS AS THOSE TALKS APPROACH. END FYI. VANCE

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